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C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 001560

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [CE](#) [NO](#) [UN](#) [LTTE](#)

SUBJECT: BRAHIMI TELLS CO-CHAIRS UN NOT OUT TO REPLACE  
NORWEGIAN FACILITATORS

Classified By: Charge' d'Affaires, a.i. James F. Entwistle for reasons  
1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Colombo co-chair representatives (Charge', British DCM Craig, Japanese Ambassador Suda, Norwegian DCM Laegreid, EC Charge' Wilton) met with UNSYG special envoy and former Algerian FM Lakhdar Brahimi September 6 to exchange views on the current situation. Brahimi characterized his visit to Sri Lanka as "improvised" and appended on short notice to a visit to India after Sri Lankan President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga (CBK) had called UNSYG Kofi Annan in the wake of the August 12 assassination of Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar. Brahimi advised that his visit was to "assess a situation that I don't know much about." He had/would meet with all significant political players except the LTTE (no trip to Kilinochchi) and had no plans to make a public statement beyond an already-concluded interview with BBC to debunk as "rubbish" local Sunday newspaper reports that his visit was a UN effort to ease out the Norwegians as facilitators of the Sri Lankan peace process.

¶2. (C) Asked after co-chair reps shared their views to comment on his perceptions and on possible UN next steps, Brahimi said clearly more had to be done to stem flows of money and weapons to the LTTE. Moreover, in his view, the UN needed to do more to call the LTTE on the carpet over increasing child recruitment numbers ("I'm astonished at how quiet we've been"). Brahimi commented that, atypically compared to most such situations, the cease-fire in Sri Lanka has "held for a hell of a long time" given that it had not been followed by a "meaningful peace process" and mused (without reaching any conclusions) whether a process similar to the Bonn Afghanistan meetings ("with key players waiting in the back rooms to intervene as needed") might have utility. The Algerian also opined that, given the LTTE's reputation as a "very brutal organization," perhaps the United Nations needed to be more outspoken in condemning the LTTE's "campaign of assassinations, culminated by but not limited to" Kadirgamar's murder.

¶3. (C) Brahimi said he will brief UNSYG Annan who will meet CBK in New York later this month. Brahimi has a meeting scheduled with Norwegian FM Petersen and DFM Helgesen next week in New York (and compared notes with them before his trip). Brahimi doubted that much will come out of his trip in light of the imminent Sri Lankan presidential elections and told co-chair reps that "at this stage" he does not foresee a return to Sri Lanka.  
ENTWISTLE